



IndieCreator: Insights from a Newbie Comic Creator & Other Industry Pros

This is a series of bi-weekly columns by Bob Heske @ Heske Horror, creator of [The Night Projectionist](#) and [Cold Blooded Chillers](#), featuring interviews and insights from indie comic artists, writers, creators, distributors and visionaries.

Rants and Raves from Recent Events

OK, I am going to break tradition and go “free form” with this column. So for those of you who are expecting a meat and potatoes interview with an industry woo-hoo ... sorry to disappoint. Today we’re serving broccoli with cheese sauce.



Scare Affair

I recently manned the booth for the New England Horror Writers association (NEHW) during the Rock and Shock convention at the DCU Convention Center in Worcester, Massachusetts (USA). Here are some “takeaways”:

Horror con attendees have more tattoos than hair.

Ever been to one of these things? If you have, nuff said.

Horror writers aren’t scary – in fact, they’re very cool!

After spending eight hours over two days with fellow NEHW members Rick Haringa, TJ May, Paul McMahon, Kurt Newton, Morven Westfield and Trisha Wooldridge, I no longer believe that horror writers are unsociable sociopaths (like me). This group was smart, friendly, talented and passionate about their craft. What a great group!

Being on a literary panel isn’t too frightening.

Don’t love public speaking; never have (although I’ve done a fair amount of it in the past). To my surprise, being on a literary panel with suburban horror legend Jack Ketcham (*The Girl Next Door*, *Red*), outrageous horror writer/filmmaker Joe Knetter, and several of my NEHW cohorts was a blast. Only wish there were more than 35-40 people in the audience to hear our nuggets of horror wisdom.

You won't sell many books.

Face it – the attendees are there to meet the horror movie monster stars and sexy vixens. Although one disgruntled teen in makeup told us, “Derek Mears (Friday the 13th ‘09) is an <expletive deleted>. I can't wait till he dies so I can spread feces on his grave!” I don't know what this kid's beef was but, personally, I would never denigrate “Jason Voorhees” or desecrate his gravesite. Dude never dies and he always comes back with a bloody vengeance.



John Landis is a great guy (least that's what I hear).

Although I didn't have the stones to go over and talk to this legendary actor/writer/producer/director (American Werewolf in London, Animal House, Michael Jackson's Thriller music video), two NEHW members mentioned how nice and approachable he is. Rick Haringa wrote on his blog (*Monsieur Crankpants' Home for Wayward Readers*): “The highlight of my weekend was spending about 15-20 minutes talking about [Into the Night](#) with John Landis. It's one of his own favorites, but virtually no one brings it up at conventions to him. I know the film inside and out, since I wore my VHS tape of it out back in high school (and not just for Michelle Pfeiffer's only nude scene, either).” After spending two days doing booth time with Rick Haringa (who is a teacher by day), I can personally attest for his horror film and literary acumen. The man is a walking encyclopedia.



2012: Pinheads and Patriots

Just wrapped up the print-ready PDF of my End Times anthology, *2012: Final Prayer*. The biggest (and most frustrating) challenge was finalizing the PDF. Here's my cautionary tale:

I had contacted a designer who had done decent work in the past about pre-flighting my “end times” anthology. After Tweeting about how they had done the pre-flight work on one of my books, this designer suddenly (and mysteriously) went AWOL midway through the project.

Since I'd had a track record with this person, I foolishly had offered to “pay as you go” – meaning I ultimately paid \$250 for low res files that I couldn't use. What made this especially gut wrenching was that I was under a firm deadline to get an application out for a comic book grant. (Yes, there are such things – the [Xeric Foundation](#) offers grants twice a year to indie comic creators.) To make matters worse, the designer delayed on getting a small print job to me (also paid up front) that ended up taking 3 months of countless phone calls and emails to get the job shipped to me.

Despite this unprofessional pinhead, I was able to produce the book with only a modest time and financial loss thanks to my Patriot pals at [Mira Digital Publishing](#) (Sales Manager Amy Trapp @ Mira was featured in a prior IndieCreator column). Not only did they do yeoman work on the pre-flight file, they also found a responsive designer to redo the cover and back.

And here's the weird and stupid ending: Right after the print-ready PDF was completed, I finally got an email with profuse apologies from the "disappearing act" designer who claimed they had been detained in another country for a month. They promised to close the job and send me the hi res files right away. Naturally, as of this writing, I am still waiting for them.

The moral of the story? You never know when a vendor is going to whack out on you, so keep your Rolodex full of trusted artists, pre-flight designers, and printers or your project will perish.

Speaking of Patriots, a ten-gun salute goes out again to the artists, writers and letterists who contributed to the book. You can check out an e-preview [here](#).



Dr. Ed Heske
(my big bro)

On the Lighter Side ...

Just wrapped up the rewrite of my comedy feature LOVE STUPID. The film has secured funding thanks to the sheer will, determination and "put my financial ass on the line" passion of director/producer Daniel Cayarga. The film will be shot on location in New Mexico in February/March 2010. I'll post updates on casting in future columns, but I am very upbeat about this project and we are already assembling a kick-ass production crew. And kudos to another Patriot, my older brother **Dr. Edward Heske**, who took \$10,000 out of his savings to invest in the film. Estimated budget will be \$1M-\$2M.

The "Other" Paranormal Activity

I'll be appearing as a guest on Jim Harold's [Paranormal Podcast](#) sometime in November/December pimping my book. Jim wrote the Foreword for *2012: Final Prayer* and was kind enough to invite me onto the show. Appearing with me will be 2012 best-selling authors [Marshall Masters](#) (*Planet X Forecast and 2012 Survival Guide*) and [Marie D. Jones](#) (*2013: The End of Days or a New Beginning?*). Now, if only a ghost would haunt me so I'll have something spooky to share ...



Bob Heske is creator of [The Night Projectionist](#), a vampire OGN by publisher [Studio 407](#) with film rights optioned by [Myriad Pictures](#). Through his Heske Horror shingle, Bob self-published his critically acclaimed horror series [Cold Blooded Chillers](#). Bob's trade paperback [Bone Chiller](#) (a "best of" CBC anthology) won a Bronze medal in the horror category at the 2009 Independent Publisher Book Awards. He will release a much anticipated Doomsday anthology called "2012: Final Prayer" on 11/15/09. Email Bob at info@coldbloodedchillers.com.